

Title of Project: Rights Education, Yemen
Country of project implementation: Yemen
Sponsoring College: International House NY
Designated Project Leader: Ali Almutadha

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:



مواطنة لحقوق الإنسان
Mwatana for Human Rights

Bringing together young leaders in civil society from all the governorates in Yemen Introducing them to the value and significance of the defense of human rights in and post conflict in order to have a bottom-up movement towards building a long lasting and sustainable peace that puts the value of human life in the forefront.

The project “**Rights Education, Yemen**”, aimed to target young leaders from ALL governorates in Yemen who are civically engaged in their communities and are ready to collaborate with their peers from other areas in the country to build a movement of human rights for peace. The project brought two different groups of 20 participants to the capital for a two-day convening, for a total of 40. The participants learned more about the following topics:

- A. **Human rights in local and international law.** Most people in Yemen including activists and civil society leaders are not aware of their rights under the local law. It was important that a part of the program focused on familiarize young leaders about their rights and freedoms in order to be able to defend them.
- B. **The international Humanitarian Law.** Yemen has been in conflict since 2014. The United Nations has designated the country as a “non-international armed conflict.” It is vital for young people interested in being active in the field of human rights to be well informed about what roles apply and what their rights and civilian rights are during these tough times. Young leaders must evolve and learn how they can actively engage in defending civilians in order to build peace. A session about the international humanitarian law was an important component to shed light on.
- C. **Human rights should not be politicized.** most people do not realize that the defense of human rights is not and should not be a partisan issue.
- D. **Why is accountability necessary in any peace?** Participants need to understand why accountability is very important during and post conflict. Participants were informed about how documentation of violations and cooperating with human rights organizations can actually help deter conflicting parties from committing violations. Upon embarking on a peace process, young leaders in civil society can actually help shape the narrative around accountability when the next dialogue takes place.

Date and Venue: The training sessions were supposed to be scheduled on Jan 9-10, 2022, but due to extraordinary circumstances, they took place on Jan 9th 2022 - Jan 17th 2022 at Mwatana's Hall, Sana'a Yemen. Times and dates had to be changed multiple times and adjusted due to the exceptional security challenges posed by the aerial bombardment of Sana'a in the past weeks.

Participants: 38 participants attended the dialogue sessions at Mwatana Organization Hall (17 women and 21 men).

First Training: Day 1 – Sunday 09 Jan 2022:

- Total Participants: 20 (11 men ,9 women)
- Categories of participants: Journalists, social activists, students

The Executive Director, Mr. Rasheed, and the chairperson Radhya almotawkel welcomed the Participants, then they introduced Mwatana. A film was presented that explained the work of Mwatana. After the film was shown, many questions from the participants were answered by Radhya. Then Ali Mayas, lead researcher, started the training by introducing “the international

Humanitarian Law “ and Human rights in local and international law and its importance in times of peace and war.

After the participants returned from the 15-minute break (refreshments), the most important patterns of violations in Yemen were presented and discussed, and linked to the work and outputs of Mwatana. The training aimed to answer the following questions:

- A. What are the main international human rights instruments?
- B. How should participants explore and know their rights?
- C. What does documentation of human rights violations in Yemen mean?
- D. How can activists and civil society organizations contribute to documenting human rights violations?

Ayman, the lead researcher, explained the most prominent patterns of violations in Yemen. The legal support unit in Mwatana gave an overview of the legal system in Yemen and how activists and CSOs can contribute to changing it for the better. Discussion included the following:

- A. Participant rights under the local laws.
- B. How activists can access legal facilities in Yemen in order to intervene more effectively.
- C. How to increase awareness of the most prominent types of violations to local and international laws including *Detention, Enforced Disappearance, Torture, and Extrajudicial Killings*.

The Director of Accountability Unit introduced accountability and its necessity in any state of peace. The last 15 minutes of the session, questions from the participants were received and discussed with them.

Second Training: Day 2 – Monday 17 Jan 2022

--Total Participants: 18 (9 men ,9 women)

--Categories of participants: Journalists, social activists, students

As with the first session, the chairperson Radhya almotawkel welcomed the participants, then showed the film that explained the work of Mwatana. This was followed by the same introduction of “the international Humanitarian Law” and the importance of human rights in local and international law. A number of attendees asked about the documentation mechanisms of Mwatana. Ali explained the monitoring and documentation mechanisms, the difficulties faced by Mwatana in the field and in identifying the violating party. He also stressed the need for the safety of the victims.

After the participants returned from the break, the most important patterns of violations in Yemen were presented and discussed, and linked to the work and outputs of Mwatana. The mechanism of legal support and its objectives have been explained:

- A. Ayman explained the most prominent patterns of violations in Yemen.
- B. Director of accountability introduced accountability and its necessity in any peace.
- C. The last 15 minutes of the session, questions from the participants were received and discussed with them.

Conclusion: Upon returning to their communities, these trained young leaders will be key to spreading awareness about the importance of human rights in peace building. Countering the narrative of war is a start.

Section II: Photographs

